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The United States' quest for greater access and influence, in increasingly more dispersed and disparate locations, is hindered by an emerging number of readily observable fiscal, geopolitical, and security threats. Increased diplomacy and relationship building tempered with a careful blend of expertise and proficiency in violence management appears the more desired and sustainable form of influence. It is along this seam that U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) have become the force of choice; possessing the size, requisite attributes, regional and cultural skills, and deployability necessary to affect influence across multiple levels, in further places. Thus, more developed knowledge of the art and tradecraft of diplomacy and the application of smart power is required, in order to ensure success in this new regime. This essay regards several dynamics important for future discourse: the strategic environment and the 3D's of global influence, the diplomat's role in the 21st century, and the intersection of the SOF warrior's efforts with that of the diplomat. This paper also seeks to highlight issues in education and training, and proposes possible recommendations.

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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ACCESS AND INFLUENCE:
SOF'S TRAJECTORY THROUGH THE DIPLOMATIC MEDIUM

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: The Key to Access and Influence: SOF and the Diplomatic Trajectory

Author: Major Garrett D. Dawson, United States Air Force

Thesis: As U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) continues to cultivate its 3D (Defense-Diplomacy-Development) operators to serve in new demanding environments it must develop an equally balanced comprehensive strategy to both improve both the diplomatic acumen of its leaders and operators, and move to the forefront the requisite comprehension of smart power and its holistic application.

Discussion: The United States' quest for greater access and influence, in increasingly more dispersed and disparate locations, is hindered by an emerging number of readily observable fiscal, geopolitical, and security threats. Addressing these challenges requires conceptually and functionally different approaches than the more popular military centric solutions traditionally employed, i.e. dominance over a particular spectrum or element of warfare. And although power projection will always remain a priority when extending global US influence, the traditional method of deploying large scale conventional combat forces has become a more cost prohibitive and less attractive venture. Increased diplomacy and relationship building tempered with a careful blend of expertise and proficiency in violence management appears the more desired and sustainable form of influence. It is along this seam that U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) have become the force of choice; possessing the size, requisite attributes, regional and cultural skills, and deployability necessary to affect influence across multiple levels, in further places.

This essay regards several dynamics important for future discourse: the strategic environment and a brief examination of the 3D's of global influence, the diplomat's role in the 21st century, and the intersection of the SOF warrior's efforts with that of the diplomat. Additionally, this essay does not propose to have all the answers nor the best methods for implementation of change within USSOCOM, but seeks to highlight some of the challenges and "white space" in education and training, and proposes recommendations to address a few of the issues.

Conclusion: As more individuals tend to exert their liberties and exercise their freedoms, they can grant power or authority to criminal cartels, terrorists, or insurgents if they perceive these actors to be better able to address their specific political, social, economic, or security needs. This leads to a competition for persuasion and influence over relevant and disparate populations; SOF is pressed in close to those populations. The most effective and long-term method for exerting influence equates to guerilla diplomacy – meaningful exchange, negotiation and persuasion on the fringe-diplomatic practice in more distant, less state-centric places, ranging from shanty towns to conflict zones. More developed knowledge of the art and tradecraft of diplomacy and the application of smart power is required, in order to ensure success in this new regime.

Acknowledgements

The genesis of this monograph occurred over ten years ago as the nation entered into a violent struggle with extremism, radicalization, and a need to contend with the growing networks and interconnectedness of the global system. Witnessing the contest of wills and the introduction of large conventional forces on a complex system, I wanted to see if Special Operations could achieve greater decisive impact, at smaller scale, prior to or in lieu of violent confrontation, yet never losing the warrior ethos. Plutarch once spoke of the Spartans commenting, “*The Spartans do not ask how many are the enemy, but where are they.*” That same spirit is true of our Special Operations community and having the honor to witness it first hand is nothing short of inspiring. I am strengthened by the resolve of the brave men and women of the Special Operations community; warriors, scholars and thinkers – guerilla diplomats.

I would first like to thank my family for their advice, wisdom, steadfast resolve, and understanding. I would also like to thank Dr. Rebecca Johnson and LtCol Michael Lewis for their patience, mentorship, and guidance throughout this process. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank the Quiet Professionals; the men and women of the Special Operations community and their families for their continued effort, dedication, and indomitable spirit.

INTRODUCTION

“A nation that makes a great distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its laws made by cowards and its wars fought by fools.” - Thucydides

The geostrategic environment of the 21st century can be characterized as an entropy engine or chaotic system, slowly moving toward a state of disorder, increasing in uncertainty and complexity. Globalization, shifting geopolitical priorities, significant technological advancements, and a contracting global economy add fuel to the confusion. Additionally, the traditional view of power and influence to make strategic impacts, with effects that ripple throughout the globe, no longer resides solely in the hands of senior officials, heads of state, or the crests of military or bureaucratic hierarchies. Recent events such as the Arab Spring elucidate the notion that influence is now dispersed at lower levels in the hands of regional or local level leaders and non-state entities. At these various power bands of the entropy engine and in the interest of national security, the United States is in a contest for two things; greater global access and influence.

An emerging number of readily observable fiscal, geopolitical, and security threats hinders the United States' quest for greater access and influence, in increasingly more dispersed and disparate locations. Addressing these challenges requires conceptually and functionally different approaches than the more popular military centric solutions traditionally employed, i.e. dominance over a particular spectrum or element of warfare. Although power projection will always remain a priority when extending global US influence, the traditional method of deploying large-scale conventional combat forces has become a more cost prohibitive and less attractive venture. Increased diplomacy and relationship building tempered with a careful blend of expertise and proficiency in violence management appears the more desired and sustainable

form of influence. It is along this seam that U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) have become the force of choice possessing the size, requisite attributes, regional and cultural skills, and rapid deployability needed to influence across multiple levels, in further places.

In broader terms, Niccolo Machiavelli once mentioned, “whosoever desires constant success must *change* his conduct with the times.”¹ As U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) continues to follow this advice and cultivates its 3D (Defense-Diplomacy-Development)² operators to serve in new demanding environments it must develop an equally balanced comprehensive strategy to both better improve the diplomatic acumen of its leaders and operators and enhance the requisite comprehension of smart power³ and its holistic application.

As the quote by Thucydides suggests, our warriors must become more adept scholars in service to the nation. In particular, the scope of this monograph places particular stress on the importance for the breadth of SOF personnel to develop an educational background fluent in the language of smart power application, specifically diplomacy, in the pursuit of strategic influence. Further education and experiential learning must emphasize how small units and organizations synthesize the instruments of national power (diplomacy, information, military, economics, finance, intelligence, and law enforcement – DIME-FIL) within new missions under SOF’s 12 core activities⁴ umbrella, especially foreign internal defense (FID).⁵ Under those premises, USSOCOM ought to seek opportunities to accentuate the education deeply rooted in those cross-functional tasks, producing skilled generalists in DIME-FIL. Yet SOF are not “big D” diplomats, nor does the greater Department of Defense want them to be, as the term warrior-diplomat potentially suggests. It is necessary for USSOCOM to retain the warrior image and tactical focus of a team physically present at the right place and time to engage the enemy.⁶ However, when the enemy is ambiguous, for example when the “enemy” is economic disparity,

than SOF will maximize its contribution by understanding the hidden linkages among economics, zones of instability at the local or regional level and how increased diplomatic capacity acts as a force multiplier at the small unit level.

In line with SOF's culture of continued adaptation, the themes discussed in this paper will examine where USSOCOM and potentially the greater U.S. Government (USG) policy may look to examine points of friction and convergent, as well as divergent, capabilities that exist between essential elements of diplomatic service and SOF. This essay regards several dynamics important for future discourse: the strategic environment and a brief examination of the 3D's of global influence, the diplomat's role in the 21st century, and the intersection of the SOF warrior's efforts with that of the diplomat. Additionally, this essay does not propose to have all the answers nor the best methods for implementation of change within USSOCOM, but seeks to highlight some of the challenges and "white space" in education and training, and proposes recommendations to address a few of the issues.

BACKGROUND: STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The current and future strategic landscape is infinitely more complex and difficult to navigate than previous U.S. viewpoint(s), and is subject to accelerated change. Captured in both the White House's *National Security Strategy 2010* (NSS) and in the recent release of the Department of Defense's Strategic Guidance (Jan 2012), the prevalent causal factors and security challenges facing the U.S. today include emerging transnational threats, globalization, economic disparity, and changing demographics and power dispersion, among others.

The *Quadrennial Defense Review 2010* (QDR), states that as a global power, the strength and influence of the United States is deeply intertwined with the fate of the broader international system—a system of alliances, partnerships, and multinational institutions. Under these premises

U.S. military and other elements of U.S. influence prepare to support broad national goals of promoting regional stability, providing assistance to nations in need, and promoting the common good.⁷ Unfortunately, the distribution and diffusion of global political, economic, and military power contests these goals and present unique implications for the military, SOF, the diplomatic corps, and the *whole-of-government*.

Of further concern to the strategic environment is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This threat not only undermines global security and further complicates efforts to sustain peace, but also poses an array of problems if non-state actors, good or bad, acquire these game changing capabilities. Ultimately, these global affairs represent rapid changes for the security environment and international architecture and prove to be problematic for traditional methods of influence.⁸

Asymmetric and emerging transnational threats signify a departure from the traditional post-Cold-war era U.S. world-view. Traditional U.S., partner, and allied adversaries that were largely constituted by conventional forces are being eclipsed by more varied threats characteristic of irregular warfare. Insurgency, terrorism, crime, and extremism are growing methods for both state and non-state actors to exert their will and influence over relevant populations within a region, representing a hybrid threat.⁹ More tightly nested and expansive networks and urbanization within local and regional populations characterize additional casual factors of instability, among others:

Sovereignty issues	Proliferation of WMD
Piracy	Regional instability
Climate change	Failing and failed states
Ethnic conflict	Global economic crisis
Energy dependence	Cyber crime
Pandemics	Natural disasters
Resource competition (energy, food & water)	Trafficking of drugs, weapons & humans ¹⁰

Mentioned in all three guiding publications of American strategic direction, the National Security Strategy, Quadrennial Defense Review 2010 and *Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review 2010* (QDDR), each support the concept that globalization poses a predominant challenge for national security. Although the perceived benefits of globalization may be realized in terms of improved global prosperity, there is also a corresponding increase in the propensity for instability, violence and illegal activity.

*“Globalization remains at the forefront of the technological transformation processes while lowering entry barriers for a wider range of actors to acquire advanced technologies. As technological innovation and global information flows accelerate, non-state actors will continue to gain influence and capabilities that, during the past century, remained largely the purview of states.”*¹¹

Hence, a densely interconnected and networked world creates opportunities for previously difficult associations and latent threats to form. Legal business transactions intertwine with distributed illicit activities facilitating potentially lethal actions. These characteristics coupled with rising trends in urbanization add complexity to the international security environment.

According to the *World Urbanization Prospects 2009 Review*, between 2009 and 2050, the world population is expected to increase by 2.3 billion, from 6.8 billion to 9.1 billion. At the same time, the population living in urban areas is projected to gain 2.9 billion, passing from 3.4 billion in 2009 to 6.3 billion 2050.¹² Thus, the urban areas of the world are expected to absorb all the population growth expected over the next four decades while at the same time drawing in some of the rural population.¹³ Add to this growth, increased ethnic, social, and cultural diversity in urban areas and socio-economic and political frustration with overburdened government capacity, law enforcement, infrastructure development and health issues and prospects for conflict soon become prevalent. These trend lines indicate that all entities working for national security require both conceptual and functional understanding of infrastructure development, governance in over-populated sprawling areas, and security in order to manage the

propensity for violence in urban vice rural areas. Furthermore, nation states and stakeholders must be prepared to address the notion that when governments cannot provide for their citizens, radicalization and association with non-state actors become viable options when the disenfranchised turn to them for solutions to their problems.

Other powerful trends also challenge the current national security environment. Rising demand for resources, the effects of climate change, the emergence of new strains of disease, and profound cultural and demographic tensions in several regions are of great strategic importance. And USSOCOM has a significant part to play in addressing these dynamics and preventing the rise of threats to U.S. interests. The implication across all agencies reveal that all stakeholders need to both appreciate and effectively integrate the use of diplomacy, development, and defense, along with intelligence, law enforcement, and economic tools of statecraft. *Hybridizing* agency functions will help unify American efforts to build partner capacity and promote stability, while leveraging existing alliances and creating conditions that advance common interests.¹⁴

Diplomacy Matters to SOF

Hybridizing agency functions is at the heart of applying the 3D's of global strategic engagement, conducting core SOF activities, cross-communicating intent, and coordinating inter-agency and multi-national policy implementation; the SOF serviceman finds himself at the nexus of this fusion based on his maturity, unique training, local knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and rapport with indigenous populations.¹⁵ Balanced within this focal point are two concepts necessary for success; the first concept being diplomacy as a primary means of influence and the second concept being a greater reliance on *small partnering dispersed engagement teams* (SPDE teams).

According to the NSS, “diplomacy is as fundamental to our national security as our defense capability and our diplomats are the first line of engagement, listening to our partners, learning from them, building respect for one another, and seeking common ground.”¹⁶ Furthermore, in accordance with Secretary Panetta’s Strategic Guidance, defense officials presume that a reliance on smaller teams operating in innovative ways will be a central tenet of his new strategy.¹⁷ Thus, the conflation of these two concepts is where the SOF operator, a first line engagement partner and member of a small partnering engagement team, must capitalize on more of the skills and tradecraft found within diplomacy. Otherwise, SOFs strategic effect maybe left vulnerable to missing an opportunity to expand its sphere of influence through more effective means.¹⁸

With the increasing number of competing interests, strategic challenges, and demands being placed on SOF to participate in the varied solution sets, the question still remains, why should they care more about diplomacy or the other elements of DIME-FIL versus enhancing their commando skillset?

Sir Charles Webster, a prominent early 20th century historian and diplomat, succinctly posited:

*Diplomacy depends first on producing a climate of opinion in which the desired ends can be most easily obtained; secondly on devising the forms of agreement in which these ends can be translated into practical accomplishments; and thirdly, on creating or perceiving the right moment at which the maximum effort can be applied...for these purposes it is, of course, necessary to possess skill in the presentation of argument and a complete knowledge of the facts.*¹⁹

SOF’s ability to gain greater access and consume less political capital for a relatively smaller financial bill, puts them in a unique position to rely more heavily on diplomatic skills during any partnership or relationship building engagement, especially within the FID or Security Force Assistance (SFA)²⁰ domains. However, as Sir Webster noted, in order to be

effective by the standards of the three factors he mentions, SOF operators must possess the skill in argument presentation and knowledge of the facts. It is here where SOCOM should focus on developing their operators.

By the very nature of SOF's small size in relation to the indigenous population, non-state actor(s) or organizations it works alongside, SOF cannot accomplish all of the socio-economic, political, and security changes required in any FID, SFA, civil affairs or interagency coordination scenario on their own. Therefore, they must rely heavily on persuasion, negotiation, and personal relationships, terms commonly associated with diplomacy, in order to set conditions and produce a climate conducive to reaching the desired ends. In fact, USSOCOM is addressing many of the factors critical to forming healthy relationships, through enhanced language, cultural and area studies programs. However, SOF writ large receives limited education in diplomacy, economic and social justice systems, finance and business, and media relations, for example, and this represents missed opportunities to capitalize on broader education earlier in a career that equals greater gains on a more expansive scale.

Presented in another manner, in 1993 then CDR William McRaven, now Commander USSOCOM defined the success of small forces [SOF] in the kinetic realm in their ability to achieve relative superiority.²¹ The concept behind relative superiority postulates that speed, surprise, simplicity, and purpose establish the required conditions to permit a smaller force to gain a decisive advantage over a larger or well-defended enemy, but those advantages eventually reduce over time as the enemy brings opposing forces to bear. Complimentary to that original theory, SOF's action in the non-kinetic spectrum requires the smaller force to achieve strategic affect through the proper integration of the principles of smart power. Advantages and strategic partnerships become more solid, well defined, and appreciable over a longer period, providing a

wider intangible front for the enemy. SOF core activities and by definition FID highlights the necessity and usefulness of this application. Unfortunately, the past ten years of conflict and a strong shift in focus toward Counter Terrorism and direct action²² missions has emphasized SOFs commando role and limited the focus toward non-kinetic strategic engagement activities.²³

Ultimately, SOF must come to grips with the reality that skills in the kinetic realm although paramount, perishable, and in high demand will not consume the greatest percentage of their strategic efforts, but require temperament and balance in greater degree with long-term collaborative relationship building. Skills in diplomacy, communication, active listening, negotiation, and political aptitude constitute tradecraft expertise that can achieve greater influence, especially in accompaniment with the access afforded by using SOF.

It is important to note that there are multiple categories and elements within the SOF community. Highlighting those differences will better identify who would benefit most from more refined education in smart power and stratify the varying degrees of diplomatic education offered. One such distinction is along service component lines. U.S. SOCOM has four service component commands and draws their forces directly from these pools, Army, Navy, Air Force, and the Marine Corps. Each service differs in training, culture, and traditional operating environments as well as what capabilities they provide. For example, Army SOF contains a civil affairs brigade necessary for providing SOF support by addressing host nation development and alleviating causes for local instability,²⁴ while Army Special Forces (SF) are more adept at conducting FID and training host nation or foreign militaries.

Another delineation made within the SOF community falls between two distinct mission forces: Theater Mission Forces and National Mission Forces. Over the course of their career SOF, operators may flow from one mission force to another but each maintains its own focus.

Theater Mission Forces are assigned or attached to Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) and provide Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) with Special Operations capabilities, maintaining a persistent presence and cultivating long-term relationships within their respective regions.²⁵ National Mission Forces, however, maintain a very specific and dedicated purpose, typically oriented toward missions of extreme sensitivity and national importance.²⁶ Further assessments may indicate that those factors and special tasks may not warrant additional emphasis on honing diplomatic skills during their tenure with that force.

Distinguishing between these forces and components within SOF highlights the broad spectrum of capabilities within SOF and provides context for who may need additional training in diplomacy or smart power application. Further research would need to identify the specific elements that would benefit most and to what degree without absorbing unjustifiable transaction costs. Either way in an era where the challenges are more unpredictable, diverse and require both whole of government, multi-national, and private or commercial support, the enthusiasm for SOF can only swell. Combined with ever increasing fiscal austerity measures and an appetite for taking less political risk, SOF's strategic utility will be tested in unique ways. In order to prepare for this future-operating environment, this next section examines what makes the 3D's of international engagement an attractive option for policymakers and why SOF can expect to assume more roles in two-thirds of the 3D equation. First emphasizing the importance of defense, diplomacy and development demonstrates where the 3D's either intersect or depart from SOF current activities and establishes a baseline to begin examining the SOF education process. Subsequent sections address why and how SOF continuing education should not rely only on traditional professional military education (PME), on-the-job training, regional and area studies and language, but should also include more formal instruction on the application of instruments

of national power, multilateral diplomacy, advanced negotiation, justice, finance, and information technology, to name a few.

3D's of Projecting Global Influence

The complexity of today's and tomorrow's strategic environments requires that our Special Operations Forces (SOF) operators maintain not only the highest levels of war fighting expertise but also cultural knowledge and diplomacy skills. We are developing '3-D Operators' – members of a multi-dimensional force prepared to lay the groundwork in the myriad diplomatic, development, and defense activities that contribute to our Government's pursuit of our vital national interests... We have a long way to go in recognizing and incentivizing such expertise as an operational necessity before we can truly develop and sustain real experts in specific key regions around the world.

-- USSOCOM Commander Admiral Eric Olson
House Armed Services Committee Posture Statement 2009

Recognition of the asymmetric threats and the subsequent failures and successes in mitigating them, inform of the Department of Defense and U.S. Government's recent adjustment to traditional problem solving conventions and a move toward pursuing a more whole-of-government approach. This approach, although not entirely novel in its existence, does expand both the institutional demands and individual skills required of all affected parties. As of now, the United States' primary means of synergizing global influence is through the comprehensive utilization of the elements of national power; smart power.²⁷ Smart power constitutes the full range of tools of national power available at the US's disposal- diplomatic, information, military, and economic, financial, intelligence and law enforcement (DIME-FIL) - components utilized in a holistic fashion to address a broad spectrum of security threats and to wield strategic effect, all while leveraging those same tools with our partners and allies.²⁸ Adm. Olson, in the aforementioned comment, asserts that effective application of smart power must be a functional and educational requirement for all agency partners, and SOF should carefully appreciate that inference.

Defense – Development – Diplomacy

Hybridization in and among agencies is a necessary evolutionary process and symptomatic of the changing geo-strategic, political, and fiscal environment that demands greater interaction among diplomatic, economic and social actions. The American Academy of Diplomacy emphasizes this “cooperation among different instruments of power and influence, as a reaction to the growth of asymmetrical threats directed against the US, its allies and partners in a deliberate effort to reduce the effectiveness of the classical means of projecting power and securing influence.”²⁹

Complicating matters, the array of differing agencies and their representatives are all carrying out core diplomatic functions to varying degrees: reporting, advocacy and negotiation.³⁰ This is evidence that as power and influence disperse throughout the world so does the need to incorporate and hybridize smart power within an organization. Smart power and knowledge of the proper application of the instruments of national influence is no longer reserved for the high level bureaucrat or diplomat and should not be treated as such. Acknowledging lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, at increasingly lower levels the SOF operator is required to take on greater responsibilities and apply smart power at the local and regional level, roles traditionally played by diplomats and development experts.³¹ In this new reality, very few lanes or purists can act along specific DIME-FIL lines. With respect to the U.S. diplomatic service and the Department of Defense, neither the diplomat nor the warrior can delude himself or herself, believing they control any one piece of the action.³² Diplomat and warrior must equally share in setting conditions to ensure amorphous elements of justice, economic development, critical infrastructure, and law enforcement tasks are comprehensively interwoven into combat, humanitarian relief, or stabilization operations. An example of these comprehensive

relationships can be witnessed in the Village Stability Operations (VSO) program, which is currently undertaken by Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine SOF. This district-to-national-level network assists in leveraging all available civil-military expertise and capacity to address urgent needs in rural areas, needs which the VSO program identifies and simultaneously re-empowers traditional means of local governance.³³ This example also highlights the necessity for a broader scope of theater mission SOF to more fully appreciate the introduction of smart power into the spectrum of SOF core activities. The scope of the subsequent sections do not to attempt to explain all of the facets of defense, development, or diplomacy, but merely point to relevant examples of fusion amid military (i.e. SOF) and non-military (i.e. State Department) organizations and the required mutual understanding of policy versus implementation between the 3D's.

Defense. Within the past decade, U.S. Special Operations Forces experienced extensive utilization rates, enormous transformations, and remarkable growth in a variety of refined specialties and skill subsets.³⁴ In playing direct and leading roles in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as in the broader U.S. effort to defeat al Qaeda and violent extremism across the globe, SOF have become more operationally adept, endowed with more resources and organizational capacity, and are encountering greater demands for their leadership and expertise than ever before; the demand signal is steadily increasing.³⁵ In fact, in 2005 USSOCOM assumed the lead as the command responsible for synchronizing the planning for global operations against terrorist networks.³⁶ Hence, as traditional nation-state tensions fade into more complex and disparate hybrid threats, the resultant burden falls on SOF to both lead and follow other organizations internal and external to the Department of Defense. This charge includes coordinating within the

multi-agency environment and, as appropriate, elements of the international community to meet these emerging threats.³⁷

However, help is abundant when it comes to accomplishing these duties. Even though USSOCOM is a lead proponent of Counter-Terrorism within the Department of Defense, the role of *defense* must be shared by organizations outside of the military. Recent changes within the USG and specifically within the Department of State typify a growing requirement to both reduce military primacy and diversify defense tasks, especially when complex problems maintain socio-cultural, ethnic, and economic, justice, or law enforcement related elements. In early January 2012, the State Department officially designated a bureau dedicated to leading Counter-Terrorism efforts. This bureau is now responsible for developing and leading a worldwide effort to combat terrorism using all the instruments of statecraft: diplomacy, economic power, intelligence, law enforcement, and in coordination with the military. The CT bureau also provides foreign policy oversight and guidance to all U.S. Government international counterterrorism activities, representing a fusion of defense-related tasks with outside agencies across a spectrum of functions. This change highlights the commensurate expectations to collaborate with civilian counterparts while engaged in security related challenges. In this capacity, State will commit to multilateral and bilateral diplomacy to advance U.S. counterterrorism goals while maintaining reporting lines for its main activities, including countering violent extremism, building partner capacity, and counterterrorism diplomacy, hence lines have blurred.

Development. A core mission of U.S. international engagement and influence falls under the realm of USAID. As an organization, it provides technical expertise and implements

development projects throughout the world. Development experts seek to invest in countries' efforts to achieve sustained and broad-based economic growth, which aims to create opportunities for people and shift them away from radicalization, violent extremism and instability, and toward a more prosperous future.³⁸ As a critical pillar of national security, development helps countries become more capable of solving their own problems and provides a means of mutual investment in solving common global problems. It is here where the military and SOF have seen large overlaps, especially during periods of post-conflict reconstruction and stability. Yet, crisis prevention and early engagement is becoming the norm, hence the development mission constitutes another example of shared lines of operation. SOF, due to its access and influence, can expect to provide development expertise.

Several Army SF interviewees suggested their primary role consisted of serving as a partner force and as [combat] advisors.³⁹ The truth of this is not in debate, however, engagement with an indigenous security force or militia on a basis of teaching combat related skills no longer achieves the strategic long-term American goal of a stable partner, especially when the partnered force now only understands power sharing and power exchange using force. The US Army's Veterinary Civil Action program (VETCAP) is an example of the type of engagement SOF is expected to coordinate and conduct in furtherance of US strategy. Recently, within a remote village in Uganda, this program created jobs, made a positive impact on the availability and access to animal services and educated local veterinary students; all with the aim of addressing social issues affecting the agro-pastoral community and furthering partnership capacity building.⁴⁰ Crucial to making this program successful is not only understanding the socio-political and cultural needs, as SOF does well, but also understanding catalysts for change within the local economy, inter- and intra-community trade relations, and financing among others. SOF

must be prepared for engagement at these levels with the right knowledge outside of an understanding of military practice.

Diplomacy. Traditional diplomacy— the kind conducted in government ministries, palaces, and the headquarters of global organizations— remains an indispensable tool of American foreign policy.⁴¹ But, as previously suggested, the diplomatic landscape of the 21st century features an increasingly varied set of actors who influence international debates: more states capable of acting on their own diplomatic agendas, a variety of U.S. government agencies operating abroad, transnational networks, multi-national corporations, foundations, non-governmental organizations, religious groups, and independent citizens themselves. U.S. diplomacy is attempting to both adapt and reshape this landscape.⁴² As non-state actors—from NGOs, religious groups, and multinational corporations to international cartels and terrorist networks—play an ever-greater role in international affairs, American diplomacy must extend far beyond the traditional constituencies and engage new actors, with particular focus on civil society.

These issues, conditions, and actors are helping to refine, and perhaps redefine, what diplomacy means, how it is conducted, and how we examine the new terrain of diplomacy. A useful definition of “small d” diplomacy is about attracting a partner to share in

Looking internally USSOCOM requires our SOF members to navigate not only a complex national security environment but also the increased number of departments, agencies, and organizations that interact to promote U.S. and national security interests; diplomacy is the tool for that navigation. Additionally, the myriad processes, political pressures, and agendas found within North American Treaty Organization (NATO) and ally counterparts as well as the melting pot of inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental

organizations (NGOs), private sector participants and host nation (HN) government entities require SOF's committed involvement and understanding of the related linkages between organizations in order to achieve their intended strategic effects.

External to SOCOM, it can be argued that much of SOFs history with "small d" diplomacy is captured in much of the FID, SFA, and civil affairs experience along with other missions. However, as the diplomatic contour changes so must SOF's approach and understanding of diplomacy. For instance, *guerrilla diplomacy*, a unique approach to viewing 21st century diplomacy operates using methods distinct from those employed in traditional diplomacy and moves contemporary thinking on public diplomacy and soft power toward the challenges to development and security that are embedded in globalization. Guerilla diplomacy, espoused by Daryl Copeland, an analyst and educator specializing in diplomacy, states:

*"...guerilla diplomacy pushes diplomatic practice into more distant, less state-centric places, from shanty towns to conflict zones...and this type of diplomacy requires: integration of new technologies, media, the collection of tactical and strategic intelligence, the development of alternative networks, and on the production of demonstrable results by boring deep into the interstices of power and navigating pathways inaccessible to others...success at guerilla diplomacy relies on taking a less formal approach to representation, and, perhaps most importantly, on thinking creatively, listening carefully and analyzing rigorously."*⁴³

In concert with that theme, former Department of State Policy Planning Director Dr. Anne-Marie Slaughter says, "diplomacy requires mobilizing international networks of public and private actor," in an effort to search for more effective ways to deal with non-state entities.⁴⁴

An example of this type of diplomacy in action can be seen in various capacities in Afghanistan today. For instance, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) diplomats, particularly those working from Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) outside of Kabul, spend much of their time inside heavily guarded compounds, venturing outside the wire mainly in

armored convoys, and not frequently or for protracted periods.⁴⁵ This inability of the diplomat to get amongst his target audience based on the security situation leaves SOF and other forces to conduct diplomacy, on his behalf, in innovative and unique ways.

3D Dynamic in Action. While civilian instruments of national power – diplomacy, strategic communications, foreign assistance, civic action, and economic reconstruction and development—are imperative, it is impossible to draw neat, clean lines among US security interest, development efforts and democratic ideals.⁴⁶ Diplomacy appears to integrate and advance all of these goals together. It is here that our *soft* security efforts will make the most progress for the relative cost.

Defense Secretary Panetta makes mention of this in his recent Strategic Guidance memo stating, “the U.S. is at an inflection point amidst a shifting geopolitical environment and changing fiscal circumstances...as U.S. forces drawdown in Afghanistan, global counter terrorism efforts will become more widely distributed and will be characterized by a mix of direct action and security force assistance.”⁴⁷ These conditions speak to challenges senior policymakers and defense officials wrestle with about the fusing of roles and responsibilities, managing global threats, and contending with fiscal constraints. As senior leaders look for greater access through distributed operations, and seek novel methods for influence, SOF becomes more attractive.

Adm. William H. McRaven, is preempting this need for diffuse access and influence, with a recent request of the Defense Department. As previously mentioned, he is pushing for a larger role for SOF units to operate globally with functionally different command authorities than typically prescribed.⁴⁸ For good or bad, this greater autonomy and role expansion places added burdens on SOCOM leadership, organizational structure, and manpower. The implication for

SOCOM leaders is an enduring expectation that SOF leaders and planners will be capable, both in personnel and educational background, of accurately and efficiently wielding the tools of smart power, effectively coordinating critical cross-functional arrangements, and accomplishing more tasks along the 3D spectrum than higher authorities traditionally expected. Of greater concern, in more remote regions SOF can be expected to operate, SOCOM leaders may encounter issues surrounding justice, economic development, capacity and partnership building, and diplomacy, all with little or no political guidance.

The subsequent section delves deeper into the 21st century diplomat. It highlights the multiple roles of American diplomacy, traditional versus new skills of the diplomat, and examines the Foreign Service Institutes educational and training goals for diplomats. This section will also examine where on the spectrum SOF activities potentially converge, diverge, and potentially meet friction with diplomatic activities. Elements from this section may be useful in defining what further skills or familiarity with diplomacy a SOF warrior should possess, and perhaps elucidate the significant educational, time, and resource commitment implications there are for USSOCOM and our diplomatic service.

AMERICAN DIPLOMACY IN THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Converging, Diverging, and Overlapping Dynamics: As the lead agency for diplomacy, Department of State employs approximately 7,500 Foreign Service Officers (FSO). FSOs, internationally recognized U.S. diplomatic representatives, receive much of their formal instruction through two primary methods: specific programs taught at the Foreign Service Institute and experientially through on the job training and mentorship. Currently FSO's conduct a series of diplomatic roles: promote U.S. foreign policies abroad, report, analyze and make subsequent policy recommendations, support economic and commercial interests, and negotiate

treaties and agreements. Additional duties involve active participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and crisis management, and providing support for U.S. military and law-enforcement activities.

With regard to many of these functions, SOF activities converge and diverge predictably from today's diplomat. The SOF operator and diplomat maintain very different time horizons, methodologies, and mentalities with respect to many of these functions. Along the spectrum where tradespace overlaps, key points of divergence include understanding and generating policy versus implementation, and immediate access to local level interlocutors and the private citizen subject to influence.

Divergent Dynamics: Clausewitz classically stated, "War is a continuation of policy by other means."⁴⁹ SOF operators embody this statement by dedicating themselves to the conduct, management, and education of violence on foreign soil on behalf of strategic and operational objectives. Regardless of service affiliation this remains true as SOF members develop throughout the early portion of their careers. At the operational level, SOF operators are not policy-makers. Senior leaders and SOF operators neither develop nor institute any independent policies. On the other hand, the American Academy of Diplomacy states that the professional development of Foreign Service Officers, specifically addresses the educational requirement to understand broader and more complex issues; to see issues in a regional or global context as well as bilaterally; and to develop policy. Here is a prime distinction between the diplomat and SOF. The diplomat is expected to integrate political, political-military, economic, humanitarian, social, environmental, and other issues in policy recommendations and calibrate them to available resources. SOF may touch upon these topics but at the field level remain focused and committed

to implementation. Competition is not anticipated between these two distinctions except at the point where USAID, State's implementing partner, and SOF may merge in implementation.⁵⁰

However, there is a potential dilemma. By the very nature of their presence in remote locales, SOF operators conducting FID or SFA may need to educate, advise, or direct a particular political agenda with little or no political guidance available; perhaps an embassy or consulate is non-existent. Regardless, these new levels of interaction and representation in diplomatic contexts conflict with conventional views of military involvement in politics. Traditionally, historians and analysts believed that military influence in politics and society present a critical impediment to the development of democratic political and civil rights and freedoms. According to Freedom House, for example, greater military involvement in government politics decreases civil liberties and political rights in any given country; infringing on a government's ability to develop democracy.⁵¹ Evidence of this tension is prevalent in questions recently raised regarding Adm. McCraven's request for SOF expansion. State Department officials expressed concern about both SOF's kinetic direct action characteristics in crisis zones as well as when a local government was unable or unwilling to cooperate with an authorized American mission, or if there was no responsible government in power with whom to work.⁵² In light of those fears, this distinction must be resolved from either a pedagogical or an institutional aspect or through another mechanism before the operator conducts engagement. Either way, the SOF operator should be setup for success and at minimum understand the far-reaching political implications of a particular strategy, relationship, or action.

Another point of departure between SOF and the American diplomat resides around the need for an embassy or consular office; required in the conduct of official functions including the traditional requirement to communicate, represent, negotiate, observe and report.⁵³ By contrast,

the SOF operator maintains immediate and close personal contact with a regional or local leader, typically through some co-habitation or close living arrangement. Through partnership and training, the SOF operator develops rapport, cultural sensitivity, and intimate understanding of problems and issues of the population he is working by, with, and through, directly able to counter the effect of negative external actors. This does not presume that diplomats never reach the local audience or engage at local or regional levels. It merely points out that there is a difference in influence, knowledge and contact time based on proximity to certain groups and the security condition; it correlates to access on behalf of SOF. Fortunately, FSO's are searching for more effective, creative, and faster ways to deal with non-state entities, private citizens and the like and the diplomat of today is more empowered to get out of the government building and directly engage local populations.

Convergent Dynamic: SOF and FSO's converge in several aspects. They both hold language, regional expertise, and cultural awareness as hallmarks of improving diplomacy-development interaction at all levels. SOF more than FSO's recognizes a lack of regulated and institutionalized education in a variety of knowledge sectors: finance, economics, international relations and history, negotiation, public relations and the media.

Primarily, the Foreign Service Institute educates its FSOs in what it considers curricula of foundational skills – area expertise, i.e. a profound knowledge of political, economic, and social realities of other countries, societies, and groups and a core language.⁵⁴ FSO candidates go through a comprehensive examination and selection process but the body of the Foreign Service looks to maintain a diverse cross-section of individual's representative of American society. After entry into FSI, every new officer attends the A-100 introductory course, which provides a very broad understanding of how the State Dept works the mission and structure of an

embassy, interagency operations, management and writing training.⁵⁵ They will later focus on particular career tracks or cones, at personal request, where they will eventually apply their regional expertise: consular, economics, management, political, or public diplomacy. Following this introductory experience, much of the FSO's knowledge base is experiential, based on mentorship and on the job training.⁵⁶

New U.S. Army SOF operators see content very similar to the A-100 course. Currently, at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Training Group enlisted and officers receive education commensurate with the journeyman or basic level- regional/cultural appreciation and scenario-based training, a general appreciation of U.S. policy, and introduction to multi-agency domains and working relationships.⁵⁷ Both FSOs and SOF gain an appreciation for cultural sensitivities and awareness through several regionally focused classes and if selected, language training. The language program considered relatively robust does have some drawbacks especially for the SOF operator. The operational challenges surrounding language development are considered varied yet relevant. For instance, the American Academy of Diplomacy assesses that even FSOs meeting minimum standards for language proficiency prove insufficient for operational effectiveness.⁵⁸ An argument does exist that suggests that learning a language requires a significant time commitment and incurs opportunity cost; a tradeoff exists between dedicating time to language development versus the myriad skills required for technical proficiency. Additionally, it is hard to retain and then apply those language skills in a localized fashion, especially with over 3000 languages spoken throughout the world. These comments do not discount the value of learning regionally focused language skills, but do suggest broadening the focus on educational foundations that have wider application and are currently non-standardized.

Members from both organizations, FSI and John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (JFKSWCS), express the need to for regulated and institutionalized education: in finance, economics, international history, diplomatic theory, negotiation, international and public relations. They also recognize a lack of formal training in unequal power-sharing arrangements, managing multiple diplomatic channels, social networking and media impact. These new characteristics in the diplomatic environment directly affect the SOF operator's ability to conduct unconventional operations and the diplomat's ability to manage strategic level initiatives.

To reinforce this point, several U.S. Army Special Forces interviewees mentioned and others concur, "We don't think there is much overlapping of training and education from either end, not yet. We at JFKSWCS have invited the Department of State and other interagency organizations to our training and on occasion, they do participate. However, it is not institutionalized at this time...with more Joint Interagency Task Forces (JIATFs) in action; all parties need to expand their learning and development as part of their maturing process."⁵⁹

CONCLUSION

SOF operators find themselves in a growing pool of entities that represent the United States to increasingly networked, disparate, and dispersed groups, sub-groups, and non-state actors, subject to influence through close personal contact and inter-personal communication. Small SOF teams can create climates of opinion, facilitate local level agreements all in the effort to promote stability and enhance US American interests. As SOF operators get closer to the intense interaction and integration across multiple levels, they must have the requisite knowledge of smart power, diplomacy, and politics in order to institute foreign policy goals. Improving the SOF warrior's diplomacy and development knowledge enhances his strategic utility.

Implicit throughout this discussion is how the SOF community will expand its capabilities and functions, manage an already high operations tempo, and mitigate the constraints on its people and resources. Without paying due diligence to these issues SOCOM risks over committing the SOF operator to tasks he is ill-equipped for and establishes the expectation that SOF leaders and operators must continue to rely solely on on-the-job training and building experiential familiarity, with limited common basis for understanding. Without broadening and standardizing the knowledge base and keeping it relevant means our operators will be starting from an educational disadvantage.

In current and future discourse about SOF participation in low intensity conflicts, several questions emerge. First, “can SOF be regarded as diplomats even if they are guerilla diplomats?” Another question is, “just because SOF can do something, does it mean they should?” The answer to each of these questions contains implicit responsibilities, resource and time commitments, and potentially a shift in focus from heavily weighting commando skills vice an education in more unique forms of diplomacy.

Looking at future threats, the evolving geopolitical and strategic landscape, and the rapid pace of technological change amid networking communities, it is likely that SOF may be the only U.S. presence readily available to provide real-time influence, in any number of capacities, be it kinetic or otherwise. As the course of events unfold, SOF may be exposed to and can expect to perform with strategic value within various foreign policy arenas, finding themselves in the same tradespace as our official diplomats, and with the access not afforded our civilian counterparts, be it security related or otherwise. As more individuals tend to exert their liberties and exercise their freedoms, they can grant power or authority to criminal cartels, terrorists, or insurgents if they perceive these actors to be better able to address their specific political, social,

economic, or security needs. This leads to a competition for persuasion and influence over relevant and disparate populations; SOF is close to those populations.⁶⁰ Furthermore, “a number of contemporary participants in diplomacy are not even “agents” or “intermediaries” in the traditional sense of carrying out orders and implementing policy” and “contemporary diplomacy is now carried out by many diverse people.”⁶¹ Within our definition of diplomacy we must now include these added dimensions into our concept of the term and who is capable of conducting diplomacy. Examining these concepts in the context of the strategic environment, it will be important to remember that SOF members are not “big D” diplomats, but perhaps most akin to guerilla diplomats with the requisite knowledge foundation to support their strategic effect. Though they may appear analogous to official diplomats and our FSOs in certain skills, attributes, and characteristics, yet they remain of two distinct contributors with different focuses. SOF diplomatic education must be sufficient to tackle the emerging security and diplomatic environments and they must be educated in a fashion to meet those capable of conducting diplomacy if even on a micro level with macro impacts. This education includes further exposure to unequal power-sharing arrangements, trade relations, active listening and communication, negotiation, media and technology.

Ultimately, conducting COIN, FID, or SFA under the security cooperation construct requires access to the human terrain and both diplomats and SOF are finding impediments and opportunities in achieving the requisite connection with the indigenous population. Higher-level education is critical because gaining access is only the beginning. Access in this case is synonymous with conducting a Military Freefall insertion; it merely gets you to the target area. Actions on the objective, in this case, diplomacy - knowing how the population receives

information, how it can be persuaded, and what medium will best accomplish that – is where strategic effect can be achieved; advanced education is the tool.

The ideas and questions presented by this paper merely see a future trajectory in store for SOF. Some concepts may require a cultural change within the community or at a minimum within the pedagogical institutions for the service specific SOF operators. They also require SOF leadership prepare accordingly by valuing diplomatic acumen, continuing to invest in the operator and allocate resources to create diplomatic exposure and education. In fulfillment its 21st century role, SOF must recognize the opportunity to properly develop and educate its population into hybrid warriors capable of diplomacy.

Again, this monograph does not discount SOFs long history of global engagement nor implies that it is ineffectual. It merely suggests that as we advance forward in time we enhance and find innovative ways of leveraging what SOF brings to that engagement. It also does not suggest that SOF operators become schoolteachers, academicians or “Diplomats,” but as President John F. Kennedy noted, “you [military professionals] must know something about strategy and tactics and...logistics, but also economics and politics and diplomacy and history. You must know everything you can know about military power, and you must understand the limits of military power. You must understand that few of the important problems of our time have...been finally solved by military power alone.”⁶²

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² Admiral Eric Olson, House Armed Services committee 2009 Posture statement

³ Hillary Rodham Clinton, Nomination hearing to be Secretary of State, statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC January 13 2009

⁴ Joint Special Operations Publication, JP 3-05, x

⁵ Joint Special Operations Publication, JP 3-05, II-11: From the US perspective, FID refers to the US activities that support a HN's internal defense and development (IDAD) strategy designed to protect against subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security, stability, and legitimacy. Characteristics of FID involve the instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic) through which elements of that power (e.g., financial, intelligence, and law enforcement) can be applied to support a HN's IDAD program. The US FID effort is tailored to the needs of the individual nation or region.

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¹⁷ Andrew Feickert, *U.S. Special Operations Forces: Background and Issues for SOF*, CRS Report for Congress RS21048 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, January 11, 2012), 12

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²⁴ Ibid., 9

²⁵ Ibid., 9

²⁶ Ibid.

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